

2351.89
no. 10

**Research
Library**

Chas

Boston Public Library

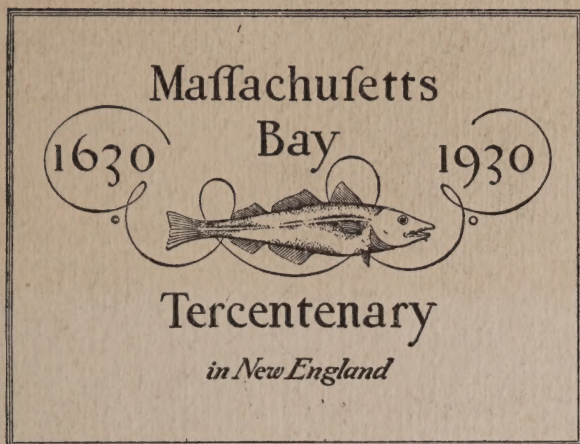
★
No 2351.89

#10



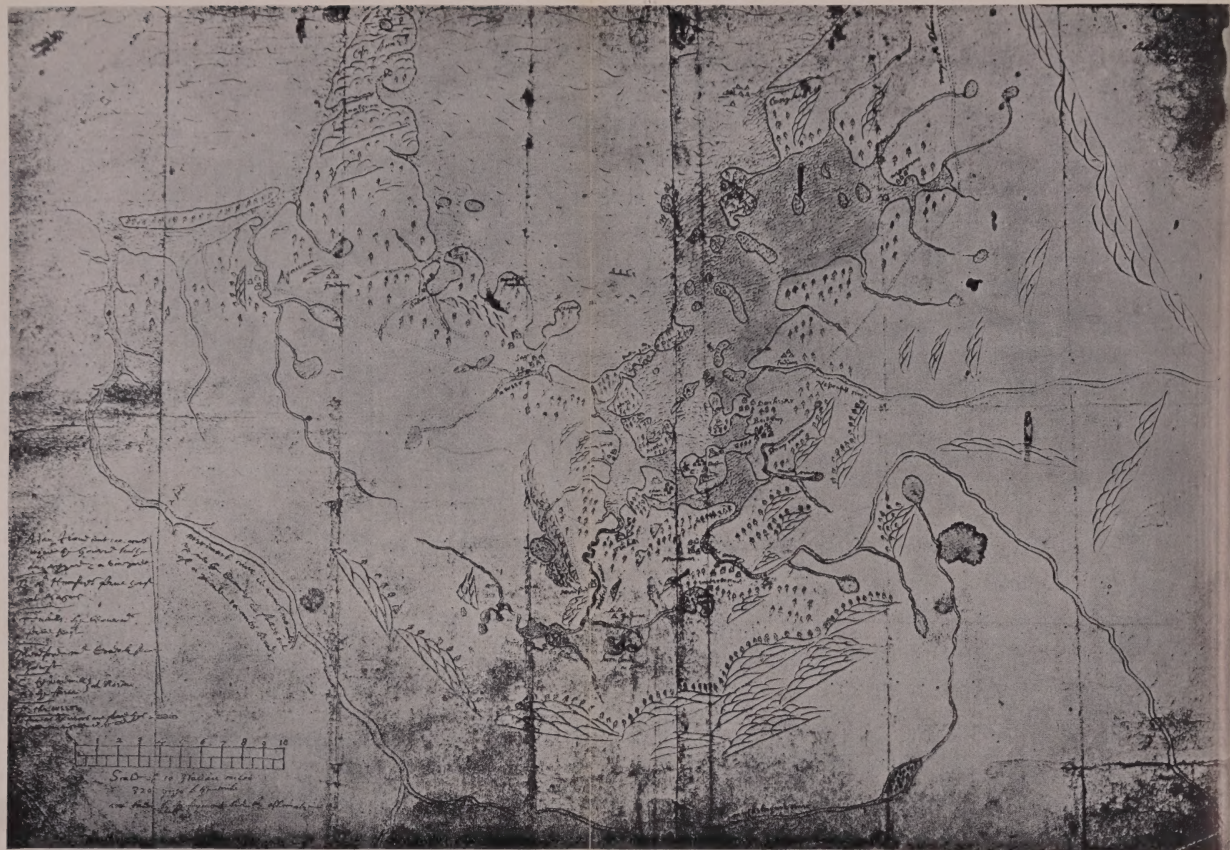
Bind

2951.89 cont
No. 10



12
7

4010
7



GOVERNOR WINTHROP'S MAP OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY
 Drawn about the year 1633. The original is in the British Museum.

Different from usual present practice of drawing maps with North at the top, Winthrop drew his map looking towards the sea or East. Beginning at the lower left, where Winthrop wrote "North", he notes the following settlements and places: Agowam (Ipswich), "Aussquam", Cape Ann, Salem, "Marble harbor", Nahant, Saugus (Lynn), "Pullin Pt." (Winthrop), Deer Is., Noddles Is. (East Boston), Wimmisnet (Chelsea), Charlestown, Boston, "Newtowne" (Cambridge), "Watertowne", Roxbury,

Dorchester, Nantasket, Wessagusset (Weymouth), "Cony-hassett".

Indian villages are located at the present sites of Wenhams, Middlesex Fells, and Milton Hill.

Only four roads are given: from Ipswich to Lynn, Medford to Lynn, Salem to Boston, and the "waye to Plymouth" from Dorchester; for the early colonists did most of their travelling by water. The Neponset, Stony, Muddy, Charles, Mystic, Merrimack, and the Musketaquid (Sudbury) Rivers

are named, and others drawn fairly accurately; on the Saugus there is a fish "weer".

The pond near the bottom edge is Fairhaven Bay between Concord and Lincoln. The "Merrimack River," says the inscription, is almost "100 miles up into the Country & falls out of a ponde 10 miles broad". Vacationers and New Hampshire people will identify this "ponde". On the left edge are some notes about Governor Winthrop's farm at Ten Hills on the Mystic River and other pieces of property.

Historical Background
for the
Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary
in 1930

By SAMUEL ELIOT MORISON

*Author of "The Maritime History of Massachusetts," Professor of
History in Harvard University, and Historical Adviser to the
Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary.*

^c
Boston

Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary, Inc.
Bulletin Number Ten—April, 1928

^c

1601. Cont. Feb. 28 '34

Copyright 1928 by

Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary, Inc.

May 8 1928

WE are celebrating the tercentenary of 1630 because that year marks the establishment of Massachusetts as a self-governing commonwealth. In 1630 the famous colony charter was brought to our shores, with the first flood of the great Puritan migration.

Massachusetts was not founded all at once, like Virginia. The Pilgrim Fathers paved the way by proving that Englishmen could live and prosper in New England. The Dorchester Adventurers, an association of public-spirited men of old Dorsetshire, established a fishing settlement at the site of Gloucester in 1623. This organization sold out to the New England Company, which sent John Endicott with fifty settlers to Salem in 1628; and on March 4, 1629 the New England Company obtained a charter from Charles I as "The Governor and Company of the Massachusetts-Bay in New England." In form this charter was similar to those of other business corporations of the time. The "freemen" (stockholders) annually elected the "Governor, Deputy Governor and Assistants," who constituted the "Court of Assistants" or board of directors. Freemen and assistants met in a "Great and General Court" (stockholders' meeting), to transact the big business of the company. That is

why the legislature of Massachusetts is still officially styled the General Court.

Virginia had been settled by just such a colonizing company as this; but that colony was company property, ruled from London. John Winthrop, Thomas Dudley, William Pynchon, and the group of Puritan leaders who wished to emigrate to America refused to go under such humiliating conditions. They remembered that the Virginia colony had enjoyed only a limited self-government, and that the Virginia company's charter and property had been confiscated by the Crown. These Puritan leaders refused to emigrate unless they could take their charter and government with them. Fortunately that was possible. At a meeting of the Great and General Court, at Thomas Goffe's house in London, on Aug. 29, 1629, it was voted to move the whole works to New England. On Oct. 20 the stockholders elected John Winthrop "Governor for the ensuing year," and on Feb. 10, 1630, the last meeting of the Great and General Court was held in England. Gov. Winthrop sailed in the *Arbella* from Cowes, Isle of Wight, on March 29, 1630, with the charter and his fellow-officials on board.

He landed at Salem on June 12, and summoned the next meeting of the Great and General Court at Boston on Oct. 19, 1630.

This transfer of the charter and government from London to Boston made the colony of Massachusetts Bay practically independent of English control, and so it remained until 1686. In the development of American institutions, this event was equally momentous. For the charter, although intended for a business corporation, proved so workable a constitution that other colonies imitated it; and in the American revolution most of the thirteen colonies adopted state constitutions on the same model. The particular features of this charter which proved so successful and enduring as to become American institutions were two: stated elections, and the use of the ballot. It did not so much matter that the Massachusetts electorate was confined to members of the Puritan church; that could be and was remedied later. The important thing was that representatives, assistants, and the Governor himself, had to go before the voters at a stated period every year. In contrast to the English or parliamentary system, this corporate mode of election put an almost continuous check on both executive officers and representatives. It became an essential principle of every state constitution and of the federal constitution.

The ballot method of voting also came over with the charter. Grains of corn and black beans

were used at first instead of white balls and black balls. Later, paper ballots were substituted. Virginia, on the contrary, followed the English method of voting by word of mouth. Gradually all the colonies and states came to see the value of the ballot.

Although Massachusetts was given a new charter with a royal governor, in 1691, these features of the old government were preserved; and when John Adams drafted the constitution of the commonwealth in 1780, he followed as closely as possible the lines and language of the company charter of 1629.

The founders of Massachusetts Bay intended to establish a commonwealth where men could lead the good life according to the word of God, as interpreted by themselves. Democracy was not their goal; but the seeds of democracy crossed with the charter, and the political history of Massachusetts is a chronicle of their germination and growth.

The Arbella did not bring a mere handful of Pilgrims, like the Mayflower; she was one of a fleet of 17 vessels which brought 2000 settlers before the year 1630 was over. This was the beginning of the "great emigration" of English Puritans, who in 10 years' time made Massachusetts Bay the most populous of the English

colonies, and Boston the largest town in America north of Mexico City. Those who came over in 1630 refused to confine their settlements to Salem and Charlestown, Boston and Cambridge, as the leaders desired. Selecting out likely spots which they named Roxbury, Dorchester, Watertown, Medford and Lynn, they proceeded to divide up the land, and run their own affairs through town meetings. Gov. Winthrop and the assistants, being unable to stop this movement, accepted it; and the great university of democracy, the New England town meeting, was established for all time. It is important to note that religious qualifications for the franchise did not apply in the town meetings after 1647, and that persons who could not vote for Governor could be elected selectmen.

This spreading of the early population along the coast was soon followed by an even more significant movement—westward expansion, in search of richer land. Concord, founded in 1635, was the first inland settlement in the thirteen colonies. Rhode Island was founded the following winter by Roger Williams, a religious exile from Massachusetts Bay. In June, 1636, the first settlers of Cambridge, led by their pastor and accompanied by their cattle, hiked across country to the Connecticut river, alleging the “strong

bent of their spirits to remove thither." They founded the colony of Connecticut, with a government patterned upon that of the Massachusetts charter, but more democratic. At the same time William Pynchon of Roxbury founded Springfield, and built up a big business there in fur, portending the industrial prosperity of the future city. A few years later men of Massachusetts were established at Westfield, at the foot of the Berkshires, which halted their further advance on that line for almost a century. About 1725 some Westfield families founded Sheffield on the Housatonic, the nucleus of Berkshire county; and within 50 years the whole of Massachusetts was divided up into townships. Long before that time, descendants of the early settlers were scattered throughout New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Even in far-off Georgia it was a group of New England men who brought that colony into the revolution. The westward movement continued, until all the northern states to the Pacific coast were influenced by the character of New England settlers; and Massachusetts had become a sort of mother country to millions of Americans born outside her borders.

With their charter, the emigrating Puritans also brought over the germ of the American pub-

lic school system. In their opinion, it was essential for every faithful Christian to read the Bible daily; consequently all children had to be taught to read. As soon as the leaders found that they could not depend on parents to teach the children their letters, every town in Massachusetts Bay was ordered to establish a free public school. The Boston Latin school, for secondary education, was founded as early as 1635; and Harvard College in 1636, "for the advancement of all good literature, arts, and sciences." No colony in the world's history has been so careful to educate its children as Massachusetts Bay; and from there the idea of free public education for all, without any taint of charity about it, has spread over the United States and back again to Europe. Massachusetts established in 1638 the first printing-press, and for almost 50 years she had the only printing-presses in the English colonies.

For modern business, the transfer of the charter is equally significant. Calvinism was a faith that appealed to business men, and made them keener; self-government gave them opportunities that were denied to other colonists; the climate was stimulating, and the success of Virginia a challenge. The Puritans believed that success in business was a sign of divine favor, but they did not approve success attained by unfair means.

They established a sound, wholesome society, based on free labor and a diversity of occupations; a society in which, for 100 years, there was work for everyone, but nothing for those who would not work. No one became very rich, but there were no beggars. Although agriculture was the principal industry, it did not satisfy the more enterprising settlers, who soon began building ships, trading with the West Indies and with Virginia. Within fifty years Boston was the most thriving seaport in America and the chief port of exchange for West India produce, while the shipyards of Massachusetts from Haverhill and old Newbury, all the way around to Westport, were famous for their staunch, swift vessels. Industrial experiments were constantly being made, and although many of them failed, the colonists learned how to smelt iron from bog ore, to weave cloth from West India cotton, and to make good homespun for their common clothing. After the pioneer hardships had passed, they built houses and public buildings that are a model to architects of today and a joy to all who behold them.

The settlers of Massachusetts Bay were Puritans, Calvinist in doctrine, with the Congregational form of church. A good deal has been written about their narrowness, bigotry, and intolerance; the natural defects of their zeal and

passionate faith. They were trying the experiment of a Bible colony, and believed that disturbers of their peace ought to found colonies elsewhere—there being plenty of space available. Undoubtedly the Puritans were cruel and harsh to all who dissented from them in their religion; but we must remember that the 17th century was the period of the Thirty Years War in Europe. It remained for a later generation to discover the value of religious liberty, free speech, and a free press. In the course of time, the Puritans' faith was liberalized and their attitude toward other people and their religion became tolerant and helpful. By the time of the American revolution, Massachusetts led the liberal Protestant movement in America; and leaders of the historic Puritan churches contributed toward the building of the first Catholic cathedral in New England.

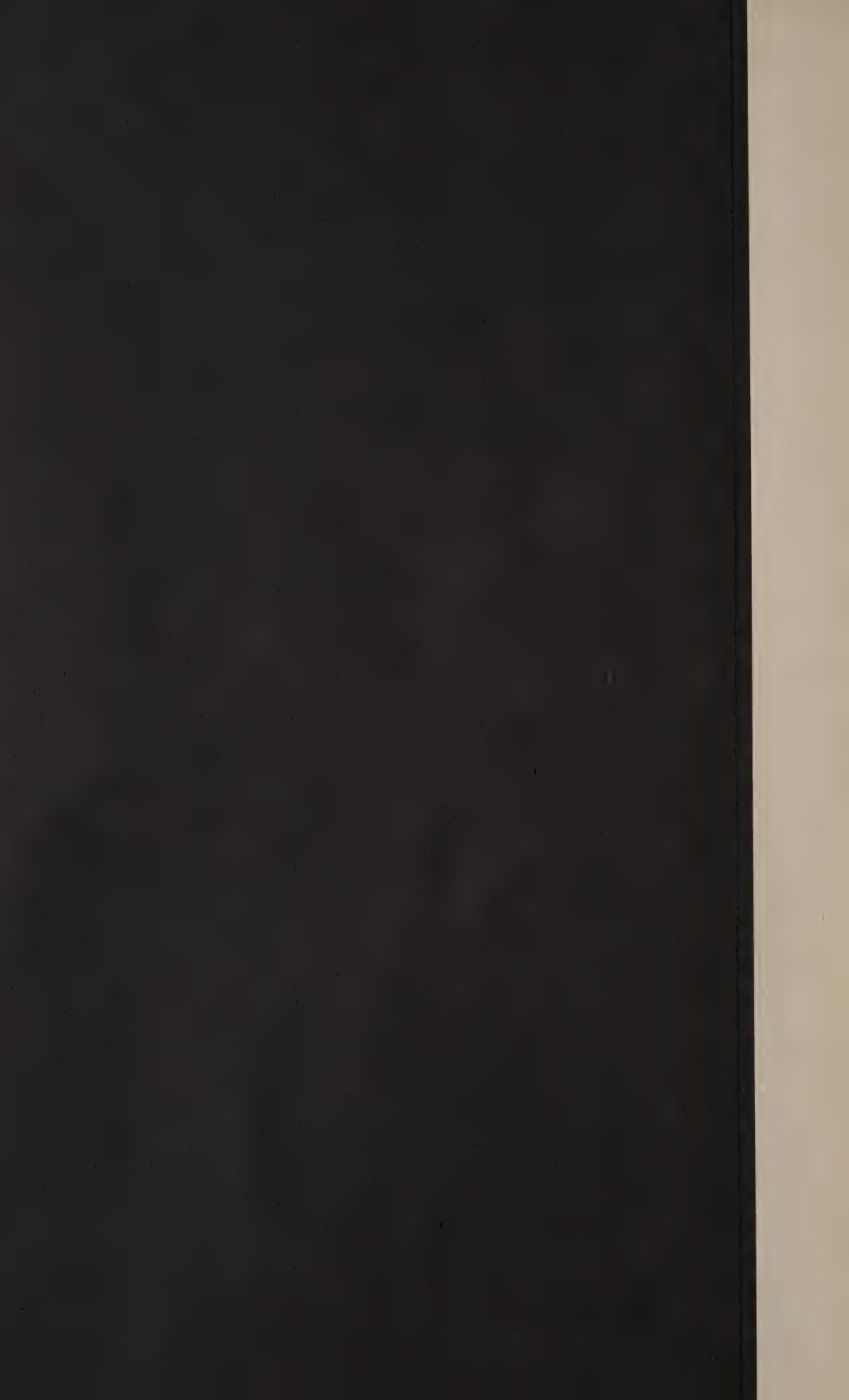
The virtues of the Puritans—their serious view of life, reverence and intense desire to conform to God's will—are also the virtues of the different sects, Christian and Hebrew, that are represented in the Massachusetts of today. Stern creed though it was, Puritanism was an admirable discipline for a pioneer country, and it was more than that. It is to the Puritanism of the

early settlers that we owe the bed-rock of character on which the commonwealth of Massachusetts was founded. Precisely what form their religious faith took is a matter of little moment after three hundred years. The important thing is that they had faith; that this commonwealth was established by men and women who sought the light of a higher power than their own wants and wills. Pulsating life in the new world upset many a neat plan or system of the fathers, but their faith gave quality to what supplanted them. In the hearts of those that landed on these bleak shores in 1630 came germs of creative life that were not crushed but cherished. In another century, fertilized by new strains from Europe, they blossomed into the fine arts, literature, the sciences, and a new sense of human worth and dignity.

NOTE ON THE GENERAL COURT

The General Court was not so called because it had judicial powers. "Court" in 17th century England meant any sort of assembly. In official documents Parliament was called the "High Court of Parliament."

The first meeting on American soil of the Massachusetts Bay Company was that of the Court of Assistants at Charlestown on Aug. 23, 1630. The next Court of Assistants, held at Charlestown on Sept. 7, 1630, "ordered that Trimountaine shall be called Boston; Mattapan, Dorchester; and the towne upon Charles Ryver, Waterton."



BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06627 317 6

MAK 9 1934

